

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WARSAW 06967 111540Z
ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL, PL
SUBJECT: POLISH PROTEST OF FILM: THE END

1. JEREMI CZULINSKI, VICE DIRECTOR, PRESS AND CULTURAL DEPARTMENT, MFA TOLD THE P&C COUNSLOR TODAY THAT AMBASSADOR SPASOWSKI WAS BEING INSTRUCTED TO DELIVER A DEMARCHE TO THE DEPARTMENT "AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL POSSIBLE" ABOUT THE AMERICAN FILM "THE END."

2. CZULINSKI, SPEAKING FROM NOTES, SAID THE FILM WAS NOT ONLY OFFENSIVE TO POLISH-AMERICANS BUT ALSO TO POLES. "IT OFFENDS US AND OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM", HE SAID, AND IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF AMERICAN INSENSITIVITY TOWARD THE FEELING OF MINORITIES. TELLING POLISH JOKES, POLISH JOKE BOOKS, AND MANUFACTURED ITEMS SUCH AS T-SHIRTS ARE ALL OFFENSIVE. BUT, THE FILM "THE END" IS THE "EXTREME OF EVERYTHING WE CAN IMAGINE", HE ADDED. "WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THE AMERICAN AMINISTRATION WOULD NOT TAKE THE FILM OUT OF CIRCULATION" HE SAID.

3. CZULINSKI POINTED OUT THAT AMERICAN POLONIA HAS BEEN PROTESTING "ON A MASSIVE SCALE" AGAINST THE FILM. DEMONSTRATIONS ARE TAKING PLACE AT MOVIE
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PAGE 02 WARSAW 06967 111540Z

HOUSES AND NEWSPAPERS ARE RECEIVING PROTEST LETTERS. IN WISCONSIN, HE SAID, POLONIA PUT THE MATTER TO THE COURT WHICH RULED THAT THE SUBJECT WAS NOT A MATTER FOR COURT ACTION BUT RECOGNIZED THE FILM TO BE OFFENSIVE TO POLISH-AMERICANS.

4. HE ADDED THAT THE POLISH PRESS WILL BEGIN TO

PROTEST THE FILM AND CALLED OUR ATTENTION TO ADAM WYSOCKI'S ARTICLE IN TODAY'S ZYCIE WARSAWY ENTITLED "DNO WYJATKOWE" (THE VERY BOTTOM) WHICH STRONGLY CRITICIZES THE FILM. (WYSOCKI WRITES THAT MILLIONS OF POLES, NOT ONLY THOSE LIVING IN AMERICA, CONSIDER "THE END" TO BE PART OF THE CONTINUING ANTI-POLISH CAMPAIGN IN THE USA.)

5. CZULINSKI, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE NFA PRESS AND CULTURAL DIRECTORATE, WHILE DIRECTOR STANISZEWSKI IS ON LEAVE, SAID THAT THE MFA FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY POLISH JOKES/OBJECTS AND NOT THE FILM "THE END" OCCUR IN A COUNTRY WHERE POLISH-AMERICANS HAVE MADE SUCH A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY AND WHERE POLISH-AMERICAN VOTES ARE SO IMPORTANT.

6. CZULINSKI ALSO SAID THAT THE MFA WAS CONCERNED ABOUT MICHAEL GETLER'S RECENT WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE. IT WAS OUR SUGGESTION, CZULINSKI SAID, THAT GETLER MAKE AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM OF POLISH JOKES IN THE US. "IN SPITE OF OUR SUGGESTION HE PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE JUST QUOTING POLISH JOKES WHICH OFFENDED US."

7. THE P&C COUNSELOR SAID THAT USG SHARES GOP CONCERN ABOUT PEJORATIVE JOKES DIRECTED AGAINST POLISH-AMERICANS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 WARSAW 06967 111540Z

THE PAO ADDED THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN THE FILM IN QUESTION AND, THEREFORE, COULD NOT COMMENT ON IT. IT WAS POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE USG DID NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO REQUIRE A FILM COMPANY TO WITHDRAW A FILM FROM CIRCULATION.

8. COMMENT: I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE RECEPTIVE WHEN SPASOWSKI MAKES HIS DEMARCHE. I HAVE NOT SEEN THE FILM. HOWEVER, EVEN IF IT WERE OFFENSIVE OR DISTASTEFUL, ACTION COULD ONLY BE TAKEN IF SHOWING IT VIOLATED AMERICAN, STATE OR LOCAL LAWS OR ORDINANCES. TO DO SO IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH VIOLATIONS WOULD CONTRAVENE OUR OWN CONCEPT OF ARTISTIC FREEDOM AS ONE OF OUR CIVIL RIGHTS.

9. I FIND THE POLISH PROTEST HIGHLY HYPOCRITICAL AT A TIME WHEN POLISH, SOVIET AND OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT AND PARTY LEADERS CLAIM THAT THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS' PRACTICES ARE INTERNAL MATTERS NOT SUBJECT TO "INTERVENTION BY OTHER COUNTRIES. BY THEIR OWN STANDARDS THEY SHOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND EXPRESSION

IN THE UNITED STATES--ESPECIALLY WHEN THEIR AIR IS
TO HAVE SUCH FREEDOM SUPPRESSED, NOT EXERCISED.

10. THE HYPOCRISY IS ALSO EVIENT FROM THE CURRENT
WAVE, IN OFFICIAL POLISH MEDIA, OF CRITICISM OF
VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE PREVALENCE OF
CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH I WOULD
RESERVE THE RIGHT TO PROTEST THE TREATMENT OF THE
US BY GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA, I WOULD NOT DO
SO IF A CULTURAL EVENT WERE THE CREATION OF AN
INDIVIDUAL OR A GROUP WHO DO NOT MARCH TO THE ORDERS
OF THE POLISH GOVERNMENT. POLISH GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS WHO MAKE SUCH REPRESENTATIONS TO US ARE
FULLY AWARES OF THE CULTURAL FREEDOM IN THE US AND
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PAGE 04 WARSAW 06967 111540Z

KNOW THAT USG CANNOT INTERFERE.

11. THE AMERICAN POLITICAL PROCESS, LET BY POLISH
AMERICANS, IS NOT FUNCTIONING WITH REGARD TO THE
FILM ALTHOUGH NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THE FINAL RESULT WILL
BE. DISSEMINATION OF POLISH GOVERNMENT CRITICISM
IN THE US WOULD HAVE, I SUSPECT, A COUNTER-
PRODUCTIVE EFFECT AND THAT MAY BE ONE OF ITS
AIMS.

12. FOR USICA: WE ARE UNDOUBTEDLY GOING TO
READ AND HEAR MORE ABOUT THIS FILM. APPRE-
CIATE IF AGENCY OFFICER WOULD REVIEW FILM AND
INFORM US OF ITS CONTENTS. ANY CRITICAL REVIEWS
OF FILM WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL.
SCHAUFLE

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Message Attributes

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